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ABSTRACT

Differences between responsibilities of chief student personnel officers in two-year and in four-year institutions were examined. A questionnaire was developed which consisted of 70 items with each item representing a functional area within the field of student personnel administration. Officers at two-year institutions were found to have significantly more responsibility in the areas of admissions, financial aid, registration and records, intramurals, intercollegiate athletics, veterans programs, and student employment. However, officers at four-year institutions had significantly more responsibility in the areas of health service, residence hall programs, residence hall management, student union programs, and student union management. Similar responsibility existed in eight remaining areas. Results indicate that not only do chief student personnel officers in two-year institutions have responsibility comparable to that of their colleagues in four-year institutions, but in fact they have certain areas of more responsibility. Some areas in which the two-year personnel functions, whereas areas in which four-year officers have more personnel functions, whereas areas in which four-year officers have more responsibility are those which are not particularly relevant to two-year institutions. (Author/JLL)

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A Comparison of the Functional Responsibilities of Chief Student Personnel Officers in Two and Four Year Institutions

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Capsule Statement

There are significant differences between chief student personnel in two and four year institutions in regard to the amount of responsibility they have for certain functional areas. In the twenty functional areas examined in this study, chief student personnel officers at two year colleges had more responsibility in seven areas, similar responsibility in eight areas, and less responsibility in only five areas than their xounterparts at four year institutions.

The functional responsibilities of the chief student personnel officer have been significantly expanded since they were first identified in the Student Personnel Point of View (1937). A comparison of the functions listed in that publication with those listed in the College Student Development Profession (1974) shows a dramatic increase in both the number and diversity of those responsibilities. Although numerous studies have been conducted regarding the functional responsibilities of the chief student personnel officers at four year colleges (Ayers, Tripp, and Russel, 1966; Brooks and Avila, 1974; Crookston and Atkyns, 1974; Lilley, 1974) and at two year colleges (Matson, 1972; Thurston, 1972; Brooks and Avila, 1973), there has been little comparison done between the two sectors. Despite suggestions that there are inherent differences between the two sectors which affect the functions of the chief student personnel officer (Higgins and Thurston, 1966; Goldberg, 1973) there seems to be a commonly held belief that there is no significant differences in the functional responsibilities of the officers in either sector (Matson, 1972; O'Banion and Thurston, 1972; Newton, 1974).

Brooks and Avila in 1972 did separate studies of the chief student personnel officers at two year and four year colleges. They chose not to compare their findings. However, a surface comparison indicates that of the fourteen functions examined, six were relatively the same for both sectors, but eight had substantial variations in the degree of responsibility exercised by the chief student personnel officer. Furthermore, studies by Ayers, Tripp, and Russel (1966) and Crookston and Atkyns (1974) suggest that substantial changes in the nature of the functional responsibilities of the chief student personnel officer have taken place in the last five years and that a current review of those responsibilities would be productive. Finally, the predictions for change in the work of Miller and Prince (1977) and Brodzinski

(1977) suggest that the present functional responsibilities of the chief student personnel officer have indeed changed substantially and that the various forces in our society have caused totally different changes in the two sectors of higher education.

METHOD

Sample

A universe of 2,660 colleges and universities was established from those institutions listed in the 1976-77 Education Directory published by the National Center for Educational Statistics. Non-degree granting institutions, proprietary schools, military academies, seminaries, and single purpose professional schools were excluded. The universe for four year institutions was 1,540 and the universe for two year institutions was 1,120. A table of random numbers was used to select a stratified sample of 25% of the institutions in each category.

Questionnaires were sent to the chief student personnel officers at 665 institutions and 418 usable responses were received. Consequently, the responses received represented a rate of return of 62% of the sample or 15.7% of the total universe.

Instrument

A questionnaire was developed by the researcher consisting of twenty items. Each item represented a functional area within the field of student personnel administration. Subjects were asked to indicate the degree of responsibility they had for each area. Space was provided to list additional areas if the subject so desired. The questionnaire was mailed to chief

student personnel officers at 385 four year institutions and 280 two year institutions.

A pilot study was mailed to 50 chief student personnel administrators. During this process it was discovered that the respondents were misinterpreting the instructions and indicating personal time spent on certain functions and not their degree of responsibility for those functions. Consequently, a clarification sheet was attached to the questionnaire to indicate that responses were to represent the degree of responsibility exercised by the chief student personnel officer as the executive of a department or division and not to represent the amount of personal time spent on a given area.

The areas of functional responsibility to be included in the questionmaire were selected by reviewing previous studies of the responsibilities of the chief student personnel officer (Ayers, Tripp, and Russel, 1966; Brooks and Avila, 1973; Crookston and Atkyns, 1974), and identifying those responsibilities which were most frequently reported. Fourteen items were identified which were generally reported in previous studies. Two of the items were divided into two categories to reflect the management and programming aspects of the areas. Three other items which appeared in several but not all of the previous studies were selected and one new item (veterans programs) was added by the researcher. As these items have been demonstrated by previous studies to be appropriate descriptions of the functions of the chief student personnel officer, therefore, the items included in the instrument can be said to serve as a valid measure for determining the functional responsibilities of the chief student personnel officer.

Respondents were asked to indicate the degree of responsibility they had as the chief student personnel officer for each of the twenty functional areas listed on the questionnaire in terms of a percentage. The range of

potential responses went from total responsibility (100%) to no responsibility (0%). Respondents could also indicate a shared responsibility by listing the appropriate amount of responsibility (50%, 30%) borne by their office. Aside from the twenty functions listed, space was provided to list others.

Once the amounts of individual responsibility for the indicated areas were determined, they were combined under the categories of two year and four year institutions and means developed for each area of functional responsibility listed on the questionnaire. In this manner, the differences between the officers in the two sectors were observed and determined. T-tests were conducted for each area of responsibility to determine significant differences between the two sectors of higher education. Since F values were not significant, the pooled variance estimate method was utilized. Consequently, it was assumed that the differences in the sample variances did not reflect real differences in the corresponding populations.

RESULTS

Table 1 indicates that there are significant differences between chief student personnel officers in two and four year institutions in regard to the amount of responsibility they have for certain functional areas. As shown in that table, officers at two year institutions have significantly more responsibility in the areas of Admissions, Financial Aid, Registration and Records, Intramurals, Intercollegiate Athletics, Veterans Programs, and Student Employment. However, officers at four year institutions have significantly more responsibility in the areas of Health Service, Residence Hall Programs, Residence Hall Management, Student Union Programs, and Student Union Management. There were no significant differences indicated in the remaining eight areas of responsibility.

The major hypothesis was that the chief student personnel officer at two year colleges have less responsibility than those at four year colleges and universities. It is not confirmed by the data in this study. While this situation is indicated in the mean amounts of responsibility contained in Table 1, it is also reflected in the extent to which the officers have total responsibility for those functions as shown in Table 2. It is further reinforced by the figures in Table 2 regarding the extent to which officers in either sector have no functional responsibility for the areas under consideration.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that not only do chief student personnel officers in two year institutions have responsibility comparable to that of their colleagues in four year institutions, but in fact have in certain areas more responsibility. It is interesting to note that some of the areas in which the two year officers have more responsibility are among the most traditional student personnel functions, such as admissions, financial aid, and registration and records. Furthermore, it is significant to note that the areas in which the officers at four year institutions had more responsibility are those which are not particularly relevant to two year institutions, such as residence halls, student unions, and health service. Consequently, it could be suggested that in those areas of student personnel work common to both sectors of higher education, the chief student personnel officer in two year institutions has at least the same degree of responsibility, and in seven out of fifteen areas, more responsibility than their counterparts in four year institutions.

In comparing the findings of this study with previous studies, it

appears that there has been a general increase in the last fifteen years in the amount of responsibility of the chief student personnel officer (See Table 3). However, it appears that this growth has been more substantial in the two year sector (See Table 4) than in the four year sector (See Table 5). It would be incorrect to suggest that the parity and in some areas superiority of responsibility of the officer in two year institutions is due to decreases in the amount of responsibility held by the officer in four year institutions for whatever reasons. For in comparing the findings of this study with those done by Brooks and Avila in 1972, it can be readily seen that the two year officers actually lost more responsibility in the last six years than did their colleagues in four year institutions. Consequently, it appears that in those areas common to all institutions (excluding residence halls, health service, and student unions) the two year officers attained a higher degree of responsibility and have despite reductions, retained that position.

The results of this study have implications for several areas of the student personnel profession. First, practitioners and professional associations should review their attitudes toward officers in the two year sector and discard any notions that they are somehow unequal or less responsible than those in the four year sector. Second, the educators in the professional training programs should examine their curriculum to determine if they are adequately preparing professionals for leadership positions in two year institutions. Finally, new professionals should reexamine their perceptions of student personnel work in two year colleges and determine if they are indeed in agreement with the findings of this study.

The findings of this study suggest several areas that merit further investigation. One of these relates to the reduction of responsibility of

the chief student personnel officer in several areas regarded as traditional student personnel functions. It could be quite beneficial to discover the causes of those reductions and the meaning of such reductions for the future of the profession. Another potential area for study are the functions of the chief student personnel officer not included in the twenty areas listed on the questionnaire. In the space provided on the questionnaire to list "other" responsibilities more than fifty-five different functional responsibilities were listed for officers in each of the two sectors. Several of these are reported in Table 6. Perhaps a more extensive examination of those responsibilities would indicate differences between the two sectors in areas not examined in this study. Finally, it would appear that further study of the chief student personnel officer in two year institutions might be conducted to determine if there are functional areas particular to the two year sector which are not significant responsibilities of officers in the four year sector.

TABLE 1

Degree of Responsibility Held By The Chief Student Personnel Officer For Selected Functional Areas

Two Year Officers N=169 Four Year Officers N=249

	Two Year		Four Year			
Functional Area	M	SD	M	SD	df	t
1. Admissions	79.9	38.5	25.0	40.5	416	13.86*
2. Career Planning & Placement	82.6	33.9	77.1	37.9	416	1.54
3. Personal Counseling	91.4	24.0	86.3	26.7	416	2.00
4. Campus Police/Security	24.3	37.1	35.4	50.6	416	- 2.45
5. Financial Aid	84.2	34.8	56.8	48.4	416	6.33*
6. Food Service	22.8	37.1	30.7	38.4	416	- 2.10
7. Foreign Students Advising/ Programs	73.4	39.7	67.3	42.2	416	1.50
8. Health Service	71.8	44.0	87.0	32.0	416	- 4.09*
9. Intramurals	64.1	45.5	48.5	45.8	416	3.41*
10. Intercollegiate Athletics	50.7	48.4	31.2	44.4	416	4.24*
11. Minority Student Programs	53.0	44.7	52.0	42.5	416	0.23
12. Registration and Records	74.0	41.3	21.4	37.0	416	13.59*
13. Residence Hall - Programs	23.4	42.1	90.2	28.9	416	-19.21*
14. Resdience Hall - Management	23.7	42.2	76.5	36.4	416	-13.63*
15. Student Activities	94.8	20.9	96.2	15.3	416	- 0.78
16. Student Employment	76.0	36.1	63.0	45.2	416	3.12**
17. Student Publications	67.2	43.0	58.8	43.4	416	1.95
18. Student Union - Programs	66.1	43.5	83.5	35.2	416	- 4.42*
19. Student Union - Management	55.8	47.4	73.5	43.0	416	- 3.97*
20. Veterans Programs	74.6	41.5	42.2	46.5	416	7.29*

*$p < .001$ **$p < .01$

TABLE 2

Extent To Which Functions Are A Responsibility

Of The Chief Student Personnel Officer

Functions	Total Responsibility(100%)		No Responsibility(0%)	
	Two Year	Four Year	Two Year	Four Year
	%	%	%	%
1. Admissions	77.5	21.7	15.4	59.4
2. Career Planning & Placement	76.3	69.5	7.7	12.4
3. Personal Counseling	86.4	73.9	1.8	2.8
4. Campus Police/Security	15.4	23.7	60.9	47.8
5. Financial Aid	82.2	54.6	11.8	35.7
6. Food Service	14.8	18.1	66.9	47.8
7. Foreign Students Advising/Programs	66.3	58.6	16.6	20.9
8. Health Service	69.8	84.7	24.9	9.2
9. Intramurals	58.6	40.6	29.6	39.8
10. Intercollegiate Athletics	47.9	28.1	43.2	62.7
11. Minority Student Programs	42.6	36.9	33.1	28.9
12. Registration and Records	69.8	16.5	17.8	64.3
13. Residence Hall programs	23.1	89.2	75.1	8.4
14. Residence Hall - Management	23.1	65.1	75.1	14.1
15. Student Activities	84.1	92.4	3.0	0.8
16. Student Employment	63.9	50.6	10.7	21.3
17. Student Publications	59.8	48.2	21.9	24.1
18. Student Union - Programs	62.1	80.3	29.0	12.9
19. Student Union - Management	50.9	65.1	37.9	19.3
20. Veterans Programs	71.0	36.9	19.5	48.6

TABLE 3

ALL INSTITUTIONS

Percentage of Chief Student Personnel Officers Indicating Total Responsibility for the Function Indicated - A Comparison with 1962-63 Study of Ayers, Tripp, and Russal

	1962-63 Study %	Present Study %
1. Admissions	29.5	44.3
2. Career Planning & Placement	45.8	78.9
3. Personal Counseling	55.2	78.9
4. Campus Police/Security	*	20.3
5. Financial Aid	33.9	65.8
6. Food Service	12.5	16.7
7. Foreign Students Advising/Programs	52.9	61.7
8. Health Service	59.2	78.7
9. Intramurals	21.0	47.8
10. Intercollegiate Activities	16.3	36.1
11. Minority Student Programs	*	39.2
12. Registration and Records	27.0	38.0
13. Residence Hall - Programs	64.3	62.4
14. Residence Hall - Management	*	48.1
15. Student Activities	53.7	93.1
16. Student Employment	*	56.0
17. Student Publications	*	52.9
18. Student Union - Programs	44.9	73.0
19. Student Union - Management	*	59.3
20. Veterans Programs	*	50.7

* Comparative Data Not Available

TABLE 4

TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS

Percentage of Chief Student Personnel Officers Indicating Total Responsibility for the Function Indicated - A Comparison with Previous Studies

	1962-63[1] Study %	1972[2] Study %	Present Study %
1. Admissions	38.7	75	77.5
2. Career Planning & Placement	44.7	82	76.3
3. Personal Counseling	59.1	97	86.4
4. Campus Police/Security	*	40	15.4
5. Financial Aid	36.8	84	82.2
6. Food Service	16.2	*	14.8
7. Foreign Students Advising/Programs	55.3	69	66.3
8. Health Service	43.6	70	69.8
9. Intramurals	19.8	56	58.6
10. Intercollegiate Athletics	15.1	53	66.3
11. Minority Student Programs	*	*	42.6
12. Registration and Records	35.8	69	69.8
13. Residence Hall - Programs	52.6	*	23.1
14. Residence Hall - Management	*	*	23.1
15. Student Activities	48.6	91	84.1
16. Student Employment	*	*	63.9
17. Student Publications	*	67	59.8
18. Student Union - Programs	37.9	68	62.1
19. Student Union - Management	*	*	50.9
20. Veterans Programs	*	*	71.0

1. Study by Ayers, Tripp, and Russel
2. Study by Brooks and Avila
*. Comparative Data Not Available

TABLE 5

Four Year Institutions

Percentage of Chief Student Personnel Officers Indicating Total Responsibility for the Function Indicated - A Comparison with Previous Studies

	1962-63[1] Study %	1972[2] Study %	1974[3] Study %	Present Study %
1. Admissions	25.7	30	25.7	21.7
2. Career Planning and Placement	46.1	65	66.2	69.5
3. Personal Counseling	53.6	94	80.0	73.9
4. Campus Police/Security	*	32	18.0	23.7
5. Financial Aid	32.8	62	57.9	54.6
6. Food Service	11.2	*	19.3	18.1
7. Foreign Students Advising/Programs	52.4	68	63.5	58.6
8. Health Service	61.6	82	86.5	84.7
9. Intramurals	21.4	41	33.5	40.6
10. Intercollegiate Activities	16.8	27	22.3	28.1
11. Minority Student Programs	*	*	62.8	36.9
12. Registration and Records	23.4	27	15.9	16.5
13. Residence Hall - Programs	67.1	35	83.1	89.2
14. Residence Hall - Management	*	*	50.7	65.1
15. Student Activities	55.8	91	90.0	92.4
16. Student Employment	*	*	61.7	50.6
17. Student Publications	*	61	56.9	48.2
18. Student Union - Programs	47.1	70	77.0	80.3
19. Student Union - Management	*	*	56.1	65.1
20. Veterans Programs	*	*	*	36.9

1. Study by Ayers, Tripp, and Russel
2. Study by Brooks and Avila
3. Study by Crookston and Atkyns

* Comparative Data Not Available

TABLE 6

Additional Functions For Which More Than Ten Percent Of The Respondents Indicated Total Responsibility

		Frequency	Percent
	Four Year Institutions		
1.	Religious Programs	42	16.8
2.	Student Discipline and Judiciary	42	16.8
3.	Orientation Programs	29	11.6
	Two Year Institutions		
1.	Student Recruitment	18	10.6

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